

**Editor's Note:** Capitalizations of pronouns for Our Lord and Our Lady, as well as upper-case "Woman" (where appropriate), throughout by the author; along with lower-case "satan" and "lucifer".

*In Nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.*

## Introduction

From the beginning, and for centuries, we have read from the first Book of the Bible, the Book of Genesis, Almighty God speaking to the evil serpent, satan: "I will put enmities between thee and the Woman, and thy seed and Her seed: She shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for Her heel" ([Gen. 3:15](#)).

In the last Book of the Bible, we have also seen into the end times in the Apocalypse of St. John (Book of Revelation): "And a great sign appeared in heaven: A Woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under Her feet, and on Her head a crown of twelve stars" ([Apoc. 12:1](#)).

Traditionally, in both readings and for centuries, the Woman has been identified as the Blessed Virgin Mary. The "serpent" and the "moon under Her feet" can be interpreted as satan.

Our Lord and God, Jesus Christ, would refer to His Mother in the Gospels as "Woman" — in the beginning at His first public miracle at Cana (John 2:1-11) and at the end, as She stood at the foot of the Cross (John 19:25-27). Calling Her "Woman" was not an insult, but a recognition of Her as the sinless "New Eve" who would reverse the sin of the first Eve in the Garden of Eden and would crush the serpent, rather than be overcome by satan. In the end, the "Woman" of the Apocalypse could be seen as Blessed Mother Mary bringing forth Her Son Jesus in the final battle against evil.

It is with great sadness that while the modern Book of Revelation (Apocalypse) still refers to a woman, the modern version of Genesis used in [Church-approved Catholic Bibles](#) has gone the route of all of the Protestant Bibles and has changed the meaning of Genesis 3:15.

## Attempts to Crush the Traditional Interpretation

In modern/modernist times, the person crushing the head of the serpent is no longer the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is now a reference to Jesus or to others, perhaps as an accommodation to Protestant disrespect for the Virgin Mary. The reading of [Genesis 3:15 in Novus Ordo liturgies](#) today is: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; **HE** will strike at your head, while you strike at his heel" ([New](#)

[American Bible](#)).

This change, after centuries of hearing **SHE** does not resonate favorably with Tradition. The new translation is offensive to Tradition-minded pious ears. One does not add honor to Our Lord and God, Jesus Christ, by taking away honor from the Mother of God.

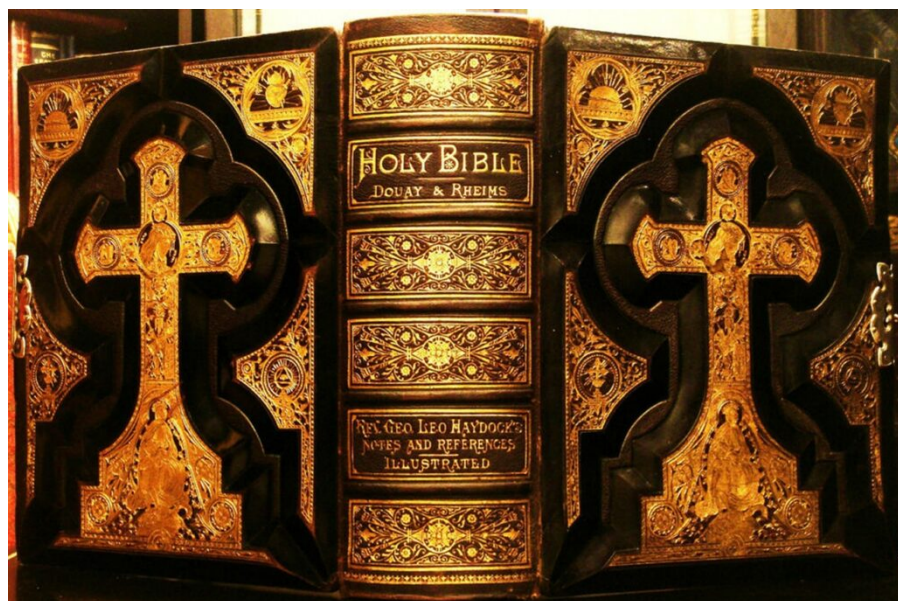
Other Bibles, popular among modern Catholics include:

- Ignatius Bible (which is based on the Revised Standard Version, Second Catholic Edition): “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; **he** shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”
- Revised Standard Version Catholic: “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; **he** shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”
- Jerusalem Bible: “I shall put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; **it** will bruise your head and you will strike its heel.”

The Protestant favorite is the King James Bible: “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; **it** shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”

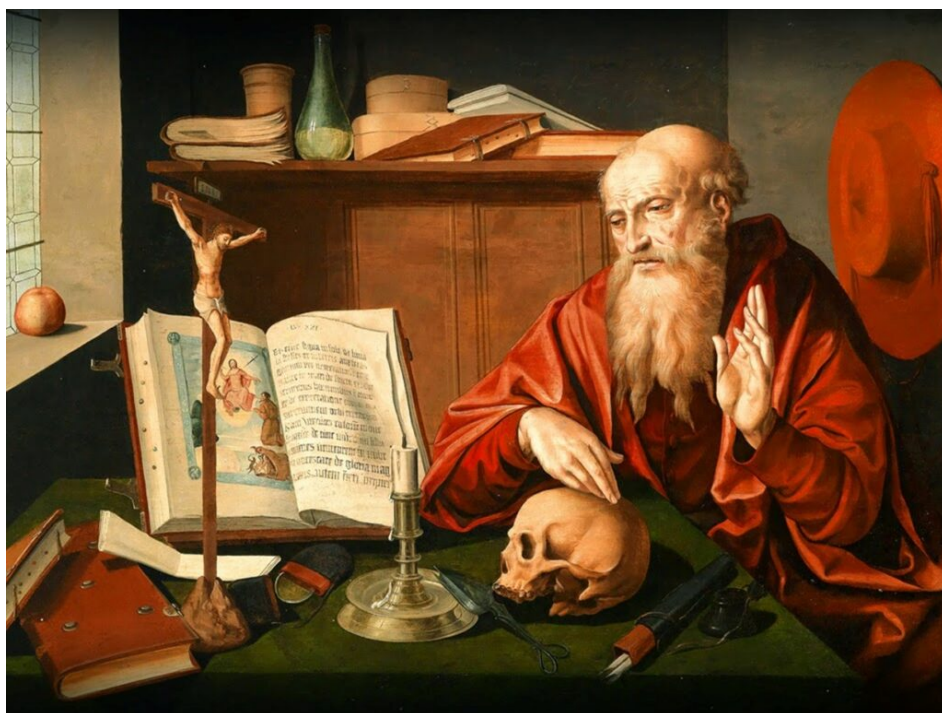
The Protestants preferred “it” or “he” since the beginning of their break from the Catholic Church in the 16th century. Catholics were nurtured with “She” from the time of the Apostles, or at least from the 4th century, until the upheaval in the Church following events taking place in the last 60 years.

Among English language Bibles today, the [Douay-Rheims Bible](#) **STANDS ALONE** with “**She**.” As St. Augustine said: “Right is right, even if no one is doing it; wrong is wrong, even if everyone is doing it.” The Douay-Rheims (A.D. 1582-1610) was the first Church-approved English translation of the gold-standard Latin Vulgate Bible, and it is still available today.



## The Latin Vulgate Bible

It was the Catholic Church which first assembled the Holy Bible. The Holy Bible consists of books inspired by the Holy Ghost which were recognized as such by Catholic Church authorities because such writings were consistent with Sacred Tradition. Hence, we say that the [Deposit of Faith](#) in the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church is Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition — the “twin pillars,” handed down from the time of the Apostles, which are consistent and not contradictory. The Apostle Paul instructs us: “Therefore, brethren, stand fast; and hold the traditions which you have learned, whether by word, or by our epistle” ([2 Thess. 2:14](#)). St. Paul is referring to Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture.



The [Latin Vulgate Bible](#) was translated from the original ancient sources into Latin by St. Jerome (above), who was commissioned by the Vatican to do so in A.D. 382. The Latin Vulgate was the official Bible of the Catholic Church since the time of St. Jerome over 1,600 years ago. The Latin Vulgate Bible was the first mass-produced book printed in the 1450s and was known as the Gutenberg Bible. The Latin Vulgate Bible was solemnly declared the official Bible of the Catholic Church by the Council of Trent in the 16th century and essentially remained so until replaced by the [Nova Vulgate](#) in 1979. In 1920, Pope Benedict XV wrote in [Spiritus Paraclitus](#) (n. 32): “the Vulgate version Jerome made is, in the judgment of all capable men, preferable to any other ancient version....” The phrase, “She shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for Her heel” (Gen. 3:15), is taken from the Douay-Rheims Bible.

Note that the ancient sources which preceded the Latin Vulgate are not consistent. The Greek Septuagint has “he.” The Hebrew sources are mixed, with some manuscripts translated as “she” and others as “he.” Consistent with the formation of the Bible overall, St. Jerome no doubt performed his translation of the Hebrew Book of Genesis in accord with Sacred Tradition and with sources considered consistent with the Deposit of Faith. St. Jerome was joined by numerous other Church Fathers in interpreting the Hebrew pronoun in Genesis 3:15 as “She,” including Sts. Ambrose, Augustine, Gregory the Great, and John Chrysostom.

Three Jewish men of renown also interpret Genesis 3:15 as “She shall crush.” These are

Philo Judaeus of Alexandria (10 B.C. - A.D. 50), Josephus the Roman historian (A.D. 37-100), and Moses Maimonides (1138-1204), the great medieval Jewish philosopher. On this point, Dr. Taylor Marshall [explains](#): “Philo argues that the Hebrew parallel poetry of Gen 3:15 demands the reading of ‘she shall crush.’ Josephus, also writing in Greek, describes the passage for us as reading ‘she shall crush.’ Then last of all, Maimonides also states that Gen 3:15 teaches that the woman shall crush the head of the serpent. So then, these three great Jewish scholars testify to the traditional Catholic reading of the Latin Vulgate based on the Hebrew text.”

### **Council of Trent, Fourth Session (1546): “Acceptance of Holy Scripture and the Tradition of the Apostles”**

In the face of the Protestant Deformation of the Church, the Council of Trent ([Session IV](#)) recognized the Vulgate as the standard/authentic Latin version in the sense that it contains no dogmatic error and reproduces the substance of the written Word of God. It stated that the interpretation of the Holy Scripture must be in agreement with the Church's Tradition. This would seem to preclude the switching from the Catholic “She” to the Protestant “he” or “it” in Genesis 3:15.

Trent also teaches that the truths and rules which are contained in Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition, that have come down to us, were received by the Apostles from the mouth of Christ Himself, or from the Apostles themselves, by the dictation of the Holy Ghost; transmitted, as it were, from hand to hand.

It is declared: “If anyone shall not accept all these books (of the Bible) in their entirety, with all their parts, as they are read in the Catholic Church and are contained in the ancient Latin Vulgate edition as sacred and canonical, and if anyone shall knowingly and deliberately reject the aforementioned traditions - *anathema sit*.” [*anathema sit*: let him be anathema or excommunicated; based on Galatians 1:9, in which St. Paul says: “If anyone preach to you a gospel, besides that which you have received, let him be anathema”].

This Holy Council decrees and declares “that this same ancient Vulgate edition which has for so many centuries been preserved by the Church is to be regarded as the standard version in public readings, disputations, sermons and expositions, and that no one shall dare or presume to reject it on any grounds.” It seems, in the case of Genesis 3:15, that regardless of what the Council of Trent teaches, the Latin Vulgate Bible has been rejected in recent years by so-called “enlightened Scripture scholars.”



St. Alphonsus Liguori on the Fatima Colonnade Holding *The Glories of Mary*

### **From *The Glories of Mary* by St. Alphonsus Liguori (18th Century)**

The great Doctor of the Church, St. Alphonsus Liguori, defends St. Jerome's Latin Vulgate translation of Genesis 3:15 with great vigor, despite contrary translations:

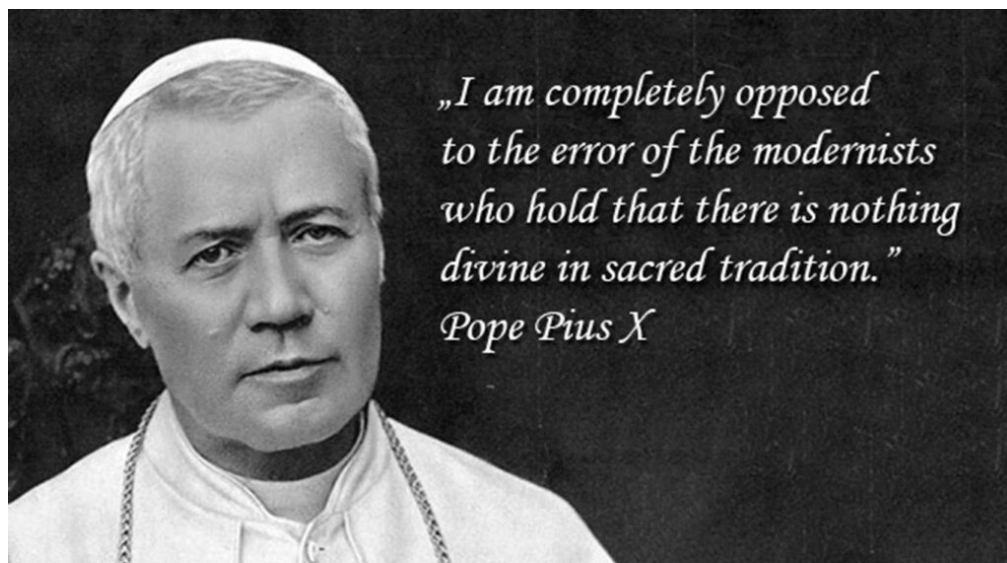
“From the beginning of the world, God predicted to the infernal serpent the victory and the empire which our Queen would obtain over him, when He announced to him that a Woman would come into the world Who should conquer him. ‘I will put enmities between thee and the Woman; She shall crush thy head.’ And what Woman was this enemy if not Mary, who, with Her beautiful humility and holy life, always conquered him and destroyed his forces? Mary, then, is this great and strong Woman who has conquered the devil, and has crushed his head by subduing his pride, as the Lord added: ‘She shall crush thy head.’ Some of the commentators doubt whether these words refer to Mary or to Jesus Christ, because in the Septuagint version we read: ‘He shall crush thy head.’ But in our Vulgate, which is the only version approved by the Council of Trent, it is She, and not He. And thus, St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, St.

John Chrysostom, and many others have understood it. However this may be, it is certain that the Son by means of the Mother, or the Mother by means of the Son, has vanquished lucifer; so that this proud spirit, as St. Bernard tells us, has been ignominiously overpowered and crushed by this Blessed Virgin." ([source](#))

## Vatican I (1869-1870)

The [First Vatican Council](#) affirmed that the complete books of the Old and New Testaments with all their parts, as they are listed in the decree of the Sacred Council of Trent and as they are found in the old Latin Vulgate edition, **are to be** received as sacred and canonical in their integrity, with all their parts.

Chapter 4 (On Faith and Reason), Canon 3, states: "If anyone says that it is possible that at some time, given the advancement of knowledge, a sense may be assigned to the dogmas propounded by the Church which is different from that which the Church has understood and understands: let him be anathema." Moving on from "She" to "he" in Genesis 3:15 is a significant change in Church teaching. It diminishes the Blessed Virgin Mary.



## *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* (1907)

Concerning the doctrine of the Modernists, Pope St. Pius X wrote in [Pascendi](#) (n. 34): "To hear them descant of their works on the Sacred Books (Latin Vulgate Bible), in which they have been able to discover so much that is defective, one would imagine that before them nobody ever even turned over the pages of Scripture. The truth is that a whole multitude of Doctors, far superior to them in genius, in erudition, in sanctity, have sifted the Sacred

Books in every way, and so far from finding in them anything blameworthy have thanked God more and more ...”

And further (nn. 34-35): “... their boundless effrontery by which, if one then makes any utterance, the others applaud him in chorus, proclaiming that science has made another step forward, while if an outsider should desire to inspect the new discovery for himself, they form a coalition against him . . . They only provoke disgust in a real Catholic.” The term ‘Scripture Scholar’ today, applied to promoters of theological/Biblical novelty, does indeed provoke disgust in the hearts of Catholics who understand the importance of Sacred Tradition.

### **Oath Against Modernism (1910)**

Pope St. Pius X defined Modernism as “the synthesis of all heresies” (*Pascendi*, n. 39). Can it be that Modernism is responsible for modern translations of the Bible rejecting the Traditional Latin Vulgate on the matter of Genesis 3:15? There is an [Oath against Modernism](#), which sadly is no longer required in the Church, which could address those opposed to the teachings of St. Jerome and the Fathers of the Church who agreed with him on the issue of “She will crush his head.” Here are some excerpts:

- “I sincerely hold that the doctrine of faith was handed down to us from the Apostles through the orthodox Fathers in exactly the same meaning and always in the same purport. Therefore, I entirely reject the heretical misrepresentation that dogmas evolve and change from one meaning to another, different from the one which the Church held previously.”
- “I also condemn and reject the opinion of those who say that a well-educated Christian assumes a dual personality, that of a believer and at the same time of a historian, as if it were permissible for a historian to hold things that contradict the faith of the believer, or to establish premises which, provided there be no direct denial of dogmas, would lead to the conclusion that dogmas are either false or doubtful.”
- “Likewise, I reject that method of judging and interpreting Sacred Scripture which, departing from the tradition of the Church, the analogy of faith, and the norms of the Apostolic See, embraces the misrepresentations of the rationalists and with no prudence or restraint adopts textual criticism as the one and supreme norm.”
- “Finally, I declare that I am completely opposed to the error of the Modernists who hold that there is nothing divine in Sacred Tradition.”
- “I firmly hold, then, and shall hold to my dying breath the belief of the Fathers ... that the absolute and immutable truth preached by the Apostles from the beginning may never be believed to be different, may never be understood in any other way.”



Column of the Immaculate Conception in Rome

### ***Ineffabilis Deus* (1854)**

Speaking of the Primacy of Christ, and yet the important role of the Virgin Mary in Genesis 3:15, the great Pope Pius IX addressed “Interpreters of Sacred Scripture” in [\*Ineffabilis Deus\*](#), defining the dogma of the Immaculate Conception:

“The Fathers and writers of the Church, well versed in the heavenly Scriptures, had nothing more at heart than to vie with one another in preaching and teaching in many wonderful ways the Virgin’s supreme sanctity, dignity, and immunity from all stain of sin, and Her renowned victory over the most foul enemy of the human race. This they did in the books they wrote to explain the Scriptures, to vindicate the dogmas, and to instruct the faithful. These ecclesiastical writers in quoting the words by which at the beginning of the world God announced His

merciful remedies prepared for the regeneration of mankind — words by which He crushed the audacity of the deceitful serpent and wondrously raised up the hope of our race, saying, 'I will put enmities between you and the Woman, between your seed and Her seed' — taught that by this divine prophecy the merciful Redeemer of mankind, Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, was clearly foretold: that His Most Blessed Mother, the Virgin Mary, was prophetically indicated; and, at the same time, the very enmity of both against the evil one was significantly expressed. Hence, just as Christ, the Mediator between God and man, assumed human nature, blotted the handwriting of the decree that stood against us, and fastened it triumphantly to the Cross, so the Most Holy Virgin, united with Him by a most intimate and indissoluble bond, was, with Him and through Him, eternally at enmity with the evil serpent, and most completely triumphed over him, and thus crushed his head with Her Immaculate foot."

## The Virgin Mary Prefigured in the Old Testament

St. Augustine famously said, "The New Testament lies hidden in the Old, and the Old Testament is unveiled in the New." The Blessed Virgin Mary ultimately crushing Satan's head is prefigured in the Old Testament by various female heroines who courageously overcame evil, including: **Jael**, the wife of Heber, who pierced the enemy's head with a hammer and a tent peg (Judges 4:21-22); **Judith**, who cut off the enemy's head using his own weapon (Judith 13:4-11); and **Queen Esther**, whose intercession saw the wicked enemy destroyed (Esther 7:1-10).

Ultimately, the Blessed Virgin Mary is prefigured by Eve in the Book of Genesis. Our Lady is called the **New Eve** since the first Eve was defeated by Satan by giving in to temptation and saying "no" to the will of God by eating the forbidden fruit. Our Lady, the New Eve, on the other hand, defeated Satan by saying "yes" to God by accepting His will in becoming the Mother of His only-begotten Son. It is "She," the Virgin Mother of God, a female creature, who would ultimately humiliate Satan by crushing his head, reversing the ignominious defeat of the first Eve. The evil serpent would not be so humiliated if "He," Jesus Christ, would crush his head since Jesus is God and could crush Satan's head like a grape at any time with no effort. As St. Louis de Montfort wrote in [True Devotion to Mary](#) (n. 52): "Satan, being proud, suffers infinitely more from being beaten and punished by a little and humble handmaid of God, and Her humility humbles him more than the divine power."

## The Mystical City of God

Ven. Mary of Agreda wrote in [The Mystical City of God](#) about the creation of the angels. She told of lucifer learning of God's plan for the Incarnation through a Woman that would be the "Queen and Mistress of all the creatures." The evil one then plotted against the Woman. The Lord then spoke to lucifer declaring: "The Woman whom thou refusest to honor, shall crush thy head and by Her shalt thou be vanquished and annihilated" (Volume I, Book 1, Chapter 7, n. 92).

Later, having not been permitted to witness the formation of Adam and Eve, lucifer presumed that the first Eve would be the mother of the Incarnate Word and plotted against her. Being implicated in the Original Sin, lucifer heard once again what he had previously heard in Heaven: "**Because you have done this I will put enmity between you and the Woman, between your seed and Her seed; She shall crush your head and you shall lie in wait for Her heel**" ([Book 1, Chapters 3 and 4](#)).

In regard to Apocalypse 12:1, Ven. Mary of Agreda wrote: "The moon, being the symbol of the darkness of sin, is beneath Her feet, and the sun being the symbol of the light of grace, clothes Her for all eternity. The sun, which is mentioned as clothing the Woman, is the true Sun of Justice. The crown of twelve stars are evidently all the virtues, with which that Queen of Heaven and earth was to be adorned" ([Volume I](#), Book 1, Chapter 8, nn. 98-99).



## Images of Our Lady Crushing the Serpent and/or Standing on the Moon

There is a famous statue of Our Lady standing on a crescent (Apocalypse 12:1) while crushing a serpent (Genesis 3:15) atop the [Column of the Immaculate Conception](#) in Rome's *Piazza Mignanelli*, toward the southeast part of *Piazza di Spagna*. It was dedicated on December 8, 1857, in honor of the third anniversary of the dogmatic definition of the Immaculate Conception by the great Pope Pius IX.

Fr. Nicholas Gruner (RIP), myself, and other priests, religious and countless lay persons throughout the world are determined to wear the Miraculous Medal every day of our lives

here on earth. The Miraculous Medal, originally called the “Medal of the Immaculate Conception,” clearly shows our Blessed Mother crushing the head of the evil serpent. That Medal was revealed by Our Lady in a Church-approved apparition to St. Catherine Laboure in 1830. Our Blessed Mother was in effect confirming that in Genesis 3:15, it is SHE who will crush the serpent. How disrespectful to the Mother of God to claim otherwise!

In addition, we have countless pictures, paintings, statues, and other works of art down through the centuries that depict the Blessed Virgin crushing the head of the serpent. As such, it is inconceivable that the New Eve was not held with firm Holy Faith to be the Woman who would crush the serpent in Genesis 3:15. Why, after centuries, should we accept a contrary Protestant-like interpretation that is inconsistent with the Deposit of Faith? Could this be an example of false ecumenism — trying to belittle our Blessed Mother, to be “one with the Protestants,” who also deny Her Immaculate Conception?

In the miraculous image of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico, not made by human hands, we have the Virgin Mary standing on what appears to be a crescent moon. This hearkens to Apocalypse 12:1, where we are told: “A great sign appeared in heaven: a Woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under Her feet, and on Her head a crown of twelve stars.” The crescent moon represented the evil stone serpent god of the Aztec Indians, *Quetzalcoatl*. When Our Lady was asked Her name, She [said](#) in the Aztec language: I am the “one who crushes the serpent,” also a reference to Genesis 3:15 since all the gods of the pagans are demons (Psalm 95:5).



## Our Lady of Fatima, Queen of the World

One of the Old Testament heroines, who foreshadowed the Blessed Virgin Mary, as mentioned previously, was Queen Esther. The name “Esther” means “star.” Could it be that the star on the hem of Our Lady of Fatima’s garment points to the Biblical story of Queen Esther?

The Book of Esther tells of how the 13th of the month was the date for the destruction of all the Jews living in the Persian Empire. The hand of God saw fit at the last moment that Esther, a beautiful Jewish maiden, was chosen by the Persian King to be his wife. Queen Esther was able to obtain a reversal of this death sentence on the very day it was to be carried out on the 13th day — the day that Our Lady appeared six times at Fatima.

The Book of Esther describes the Jewish people in a situation that appeared to have no hope. Queen Esther was their last chance for survival and her intercession with the King saved the day on the 13th of the month.

Our Lady of Fatima, the Queen of the World, brought a message of hope on the 13th days of May through October 1917 to a world mired in the darkness of the First World War. Acting as the intercessor with Our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of Kings, the Queen of Heaven promised peace for the world if Her requests were heeded. On July 13, 1917, the Woman “clothed with the sun” [promised](#): “In the end, My Immaculate Heart will triumph.”

### In the End, Her Immaculate Heart Will Triumph

In these decisively dark and evil times, remember that Our Lady appeared at Fatima “clothed with the sun,” as foretold in the Apocalypse of St. John (Book of Revelation). Our Lady, who reigns as Queen of Heaven, is directing the hearts of those of us on earth devoted to Her, to be Her foot-soldiers, to carry out Her final victory.

[Ad Diem Illum Laetissimum](#) is an Encyclical of Pope St. Pius X on the Immaculate Conception, dated February 2, 1904, within the first year of his pontificate. It was issued in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. Here, the Holy Pontiff wrote: “Hapless are they who neglect Mary under pretext of the honor to be paid to Jesus Christ!” This is a warning to those who replace “She” with “He.”

Fr. James Mawdsley wrote in his book *Crushing Satan's head*, “Pope St. Pius X taught (in *Ad diem illum laetissimum*) that the Virgin Mary is the channel, or ‘neck’ of the Body of Christ who connects all members of the Church to Christ our ‘Head.’ As with natural birth, the first to be born is the ‘head;’ so we may say that the last generation to be born will be as heel

and foot. It will fall to them finally to crush the serpent's head. They will achieve this, it seems, through a total devotion to Jesus through Mary."[\[1\]](#)

Inspired by the traditional meaning of Genesis 3:15, in this final battle against evil we understand that we will feel pressure in these troubled times since we will be the heel of Our Lady crushing the head of Satan. St. Louis de Montfort teaches in [True Devotion to Mary](#) (n. 54) that "Her Heel" refers to Her faithful followers. Padre Pio said: "Watch out my son, we must be on the alert, the enemy never sleeps. We must knock out the enemy immediately." Pio emphasized: "The Rosary is the Weapon!" And we must remember that the Brown Scapular is our shield. Do not wilt under the pressure of battle! "Pray, hope, and don't worry," as Padre Pio taught.

Our Lady of Fatima told us to pray the Holy Rosary every day. We must also make the [Five First Saturdays of Reparation](#) to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and then continue making reparation and encourage others to do so. Engaged in a life-or-death battle, when all may seem to be lost, let us courageously go forward and confront Satan and all his evil cohorts, ultimately serving as a collective army to crush Satan under Our Holy Queen's Heel. From the beginning to the end, it is indicated in the traditional Latin Vulgate that Her Immaculate Heart will triumph. She will crush Satan's head!

*"Inimicitias ponam inter te et mulierem, et semen tuum et semen illius: ipsa conteret caput tuum, et tu insidiaberis calcaneo ejus" (Genesis 3:15).*

*"Et signum magnum apparuit in caelo: mulier amicta sole, et luna sub pedibus ejus, et in capite ejus corona stellarum duodecim" (Apocalypse 12:1).*

No matter the language, English or Latin, some things don't change. From beginning to end, in Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition, some things should never change.

*In Nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.*

Always remember my **Three R's of Modernism**: Recognize it; Refute it; and Return to Tradition.

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[\[1\]](#) Fr. James Mawdsley, [Crushing Satan's Head](#) (New Old, 2022), p. 15.